

# PERSIAN OF QATAR

1

## QUICK FACTS

People Name: Persian

People Cluster: Persian

Language: Western Farsi

Primary Religion: Islam

Population: 107,000



## HISTORY

By definition, Persians (also known as Iranians) are an ethnic group classified primarily by language and secondly by location. The Persian language, called Farsi, is part of the Indo-Iranian language family, and is the official language of Iran.

Around 1000 B.C., Persian groups began to settle in the territory that is now Iran. Loosely associated Persian tribes became a more cohesive political unit under the Achaemenian dynasty. Their unity soon made them the dominant ethnic group in the region.

## PRAYER POINTS

Pray that God will begin revealing Himself to these precious people through dreams and visions.

Ask God to raise up strong local churches among the people.

Pray that more information will be learned about these people so that the worldwide Church can pray and send more effectively.

Pray that the people will be softened to the Gospel so that they will receive the Truth with joy.

For 1,200 years, Persia maintained a culture that became increasingly more complex and rigid. This laid the foundation for a successful Arabian conquest in the seventh century A.D. It was not until the Islamic revolution of 1979 that massive changes came both to Iran and to the Persian people.

Although the vast majority of Persians now live either in Iran or in one of the nearby Middle Eastern countries, small Persian communities can also be found in many other nations around the world, including Pakistan, where they number about 120,000.

## ECONOMY

In the Middle East, about half of the Persians are farmers who depend heavily on primitive methods of artificial irrigation. They also make crafts such as hand woven items, rugs, and pottery. The production of oil has also provided numerous jobs for the Persians. In fact, many of the Persians who live abroad work in this field.

Urban Persians are more or less divided into five well-defined social classes. The lowest class is made up of former villagers who flocked



# PERSIAN OF QATAR

2

to the towns between the late 1950's and the early 1970's. These unskilled laborers live in densely populated communities located on the outskirts of larger cities. This class forms a majority of the local market craftsmen. At the top of the strata are real estate investors, merchants, and other commercial and industrial businessmen. The priests and other clergymen make up a class known as the ulama.

## LIFE

The basic social and economic unit in Persian culture is the nuclear family; however, some families join together to make larger units. Families are traditionally patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal. This means that their society is strictly male-dominated. The line of descent is traced through the father; property and inheritances are passed down through the males; and family and political rule belong to the men. Persian women are submissive to their husbands in public; however, they often hold a considerable amount of decision making power in private. Men are guardians and defenders of the family honor and are responsible for protecting the chastity of their daughters and sisters.

Marriages are still arranged, but only after negotiation and approval by both sets of relatives. Marriages between cousins are preferred.

Prior to the Arab invasions, the Persian religion was Zoroastrianism. This religion taught that there was an eternal struggle between the forces of good and evil. Shiite Islam became the national religion of Iran in the sixteenth century, at which time the ulama began playing an important role in both the social and political lives of the people. Today, most Persians are Shia Muslims of the Ithna Ashari branch and are radical in their adherence to Islamic laws and principles.

## WAYS TO HELP

Those with skills in farming and agriculture could be a great help to rural Persian farmers.

Some Persians are talented crafters of rugs, pots, and other items. Those who could market their goods to a wider audience could provide much help to these people.

Would you be willing to be among the FIRST to engage these people with the hope of the Gospel? Would you be willing to lead a team? Contact us today to find out more - we need people to visit the Persians of Qatar and find other great ways to bring new teams to live among them for the sake of the Gospel.

## CONTACT

### FRONTIERS

(800) 462-8436  
[www.frontiers.org](http://www.frontiers.org)

